

**A Guide to the Ball State University
Elementary Education Student Teaching Experience**

Jennifer R. Schmitt

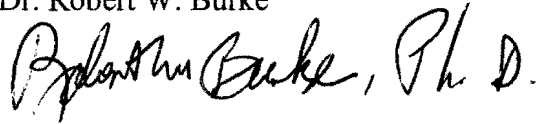
**A Guide to the Ball State University
Elementary Education Student Teaching Experience**

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

By

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert W. Burke, Ph.D." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'R' and 'B'.

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Elementary Education Student Teaching Handbook

I wrote this handbook for future elementary education student teachers at Ball State University. When I first started the student teaching experience, I felt lost and confused. I had no idea what to expect over the next sixteen weeks. I often wished that I had something to tell me what would happen. Due to these feelings, I have developed this handbook. Because it based on my personal experiences with student teaching, it should be considered a framework of the student teaching experience and not a guarantee of how every student teaching experience will be. I hope that it will help future student teachers feel confident as they start their own experiences.

Before Student Teaching

Application

Apply for student teaching in the fall of the previous year in which you expect to student teach. Applications are available from the Office of Educational Field Experiences (OFE). The application will be available online and must be completed online. It is best to start the application as soon as possible. The applications will be accepted for a week starting a month after they are available. The application must be turned in by the deadline. Try to turn it in as early as possible. After turning in the application and verifying your GPA, you will make an appointment to meet with the supervisor of your first choice county.

Philosophy of Education

You will be asked to write a philosophy of education as part of your student teaching application. Many students find this to be the toughest aspect of the application. Your philosophy may include information such as your previous field experiences and your interactions with students. You may also include what has influenced you to become a teacher. Another topic for your philosophy may be your classroom management beliefs. You may also want to include characteristics you feel are important to being a good teacher and how you exhibit them.

Teachers College Supervisor Meeting

It is very important that you keep this appointment. Many supervisors do not come to campus on a regular basis. Dress professionally for the meeting. (Dress as you would to work in a classroom.) Arrive early for your appointment. Your supervisor may be available early. The meeting usually lasts around 15 minutes. During this meeting, your supervisor will ask you to identify your top three or four schools within your preferred school system. Therefore, it is important to do some research on the schools prior to the meeting. Please be advised that you are not guaranteed to be placed at your first choice building or district. Elementary education student teachers will be asked to identify their preferred grades. Do not be afraid to specify the grade level preferred, but remember that this is not a guarantee. It is the school superintendents and principals' final decision for building, grade, and teacher. Your supervisor will fill out forms for each of the school districts in which you are interested. If you are also student teaching for kindergarten, be sure your supervisor fills out forms for that placement also.

Placement

If you are student teaching in the following fall, you will be notified of your placement in the spring. Do not contact the school until you receive your placement. You may receive it early in the semester or not until Ball State is out. The placement will be available for viewing online. The OFE will notify you of the exact URL. Your placement confirmation will also be sent to your home address.

Classroom Observations

When you receive your placement, contact the principal to schedule a meeting with the principal and classroom teacher. At the meeting, you will need to schedule a time to make a full day observation. The purpose of the first meeting is to clarify and finalize your student teaching assignment. The meeting places your student teaching contract in place. The purpose of your second visit is to gather information about textbook materials and topics that will be taught. When you receive your confirmation packet, the OFE will also provide a form that you will need to fill out after each visit. Be sure to have your classroom teacher sign it both times. This form will need to be returned to your university supervisor at the student teaching meeting at the beginning of the semester. Complete these visits as soon as possible and be sure to dress professionally!

Background Check

You will need to get a Limited Criminal History Check from the state police. This is not to be done more than 120 days prior to the beginning of student teaching. Fill out the form given to you in your student teaching application packet. Have the Limited Criminal History Check sent to you. You will need to send \$7 certified check or money order only (unless requesting the check in person). You do not need to include a self-addressed stamped envelope. A copy of the Limited Criminal History Check will need to be shown to your university supervisor at the student teaching meeting. The original will be given either to the school corporation office or to the principal. You will need to call the school corporation office or principal to find out the requirements of the school corporation.

Registering for Student Teaching

Do not forget to register for student teaching during class sign up. You need to do this even if you do not have your placement yet.

Working and Extracurricular Activities during Student Teaching

If you choose to work during student teaching, you must inform the Director of Educational Field Experiences. You are strongly discouraged from working during full-time student teaching unless it is on the weekends and it does not interfere with your professional obligations. If you do work, it must be for less than 15 hours a week. You must also inform the Director of Educational Field Experiences if you plan to be involved with extracurricular activities during student teaching.

Taking Additional Courses

You may register for an evening or Saturday course during student teaching if you will be within commuting distance. If you do take another course, you must consult with the Director of Educational Field Experiences. It is not advised to enroll in more than one course during student teaching.

Student Teaching Meeting

The mandatory student teaching meeting will occur on the first day of classes at Ball State. Your student teaching does not officially start until the day after the meeting; however, you may begin student teaching prior to the meeting. Prior to the meeting, you will need to purchase the student teaching handbook (one for you and one for each of your cooperating teachers) and the portfolio guide. This may be purchased at either the Ball State Bookstore or TIS. The meeting will start at 8:30 a.m. and you must be on time. Since this meeting is for every student teacher for that semester, everybody is divided into two groups according to last name. After finding the appropriate room, you will pick up a packet with your name on it. This packet will tell you your university supervisor's name also if you did not already know. The meeting is divided into two parts and when your first part is done, you will switch rooms with the other group for the second part. One part of the meeting covers the student teaching handbook and portfolio. This meeting is important especially if your cooperating teacher has never had a Ball State University student teacher and/or did not attend the optional meeting for cooperating teachers. It is then your job to explain the rubrics in the handbook to your cooperating teacher. The other part of the meeting covers how to handle blood and other injuries as well as how to obtain a teaching license.

After a break for lunch, you will then meet with your university supervisor unless other arrangements have been made. During this meeting, your supervisor will explain his or her expectations and requirements. He or she will also collect contact information from you and may arrange for a meeting to meet with you and your cooperating teacher. When this meeting is finished, you are free to leave.

During Student Teaching

First Three Weeks

The first three weeks are primarily an observation time. This is time for you to learn about the school and your students as well as how your cooperating teacher runs his or her classroom. Within the first few weeks, send a note home to the parents of your students informing of them who you are and your role in the classroom. You will teach during this time, especially when your supervisor comes to observe, but you will probably not be teaching for great lengths of time. This is a time for you to slowly phase into teaching. During this time, you will start writing your goals and any journals that your supervisor requires of you. This is also time to start collecting artifacts for your portfolio. It is important that you keep everything. You never know what will come in handy when it is time to put together your presentation portfolio. It would be wise to get some sort of organization system for your artifacts. An accordion file is suggested. Then each file can be labeled with one of the INTASC Principles. This time is also a good time to complete an observation of another teacher if your supervisor requires it. Your first Benchmark Conference should occur at the end of this time.

Next Six Weeks (Co-Teaching)

The next six weeks of your experience are usually spent team teaching. You and your cooperating teacher decide how exactly you want to do this. There are several different ways to team-teach. One way is to simply divide the day. One of you teaches the morning and the other teaches the afternoon. Another way may be to divide the subjects taught. Another method is parallel teaching. In parallel teaching, you and your cooperating teacher split the classroom in half and teach the same information at the same time. Alternative teaching is also an option. In alternative teaching, one teacher works with most of the class while the other teacher works with a small group. A final approach to co-teaching is station teaching. In station teaching, the classroom is divided into teaching centers and the teachers run particular stations while the other stations are run independently. The purpose of these six weeks is to phase you into teaching and for you to become comfortable teaching. During this time, you should be involved with the planning, especially for any time that you are teaching. You will need to get a teacher plan book to help with this. During this time, you should also video tape yourself teaching a lesson. A Benchmark Conference should occur halfway through this time.

Next Six Weeks (Solo time)

The next six weeks are spent teaching solo. You are now responsible for teaching the entire day as well as planning. Your cooperating teacher may still help with the planning and may do some small lessons, but for the most part, it is all you. During this time, your cooperating teacher may leave the room to give you time with the class without his or her support. Do not be afraid to ask your cooperating teacher for more time alone if you feel that he or she is not giving you enough. This is important in helping you develop as a teacher. However, your cooperating teacher should be in the room to observe you for at

least part of everyday. This is the most important time of student teaching. This is also the time you should be putting together your presentation portfolio. You should also be planning and teaching your unit during this time. This is a good time to take pictures and collect student work for your presentation and interview portfolios. You should videotape yourself a second time. This video may be useful for future job interviews so be professional. A Benchmark Conference should occur halfway through this time.

Last Weeks

Your 16th week of student teaching is a phase out week. This may or may not be your final official week of student teaching depending on your schedule. Your cooperating teacher will begin to take back the classroom. Although your student teaching has an official end date, you may stay beyond that date if possible. For example, if your official last date is a Wednesday, you may wish to stay until Friday. If you are student teaching in the fall, your last day may be before the school's winter break, so you may wish to stay until then. Your last Benchmark Conference should occur during your sixteenth week. During this time, you will present your Showcase Portfolio. You must present to your university supervisor and your classroom supervisor(s). You may wish to invite other people such as the principal, other teachers in the building, classroom aides, or your family. Your cooperating teacher and university supervisor will complete your Summative Student Teaching Profile together after your presentation. They will determine your INTASC competence levels together. They will also each write a supportive narrative. Your cooperating teacher will also complete a profile on the school and classroom environment. The Summative Student Teaching Profile will be placed in your placement file. You will use this in your portfolio and for job interviews.

Showcase Presentation

There are three basic parts to the Showcase Presentation. First, you should update your philosophy of education. During your presentation, discuss any changes you have made. You should also talk about your passions about teaching. You should then share and discuss two artifacts for each of the ten INTASC principles. This is the majority of your presentation. Identify the principle and then explain what the artifact is and how it demonstrates your mastery of the principle. You should also give an overview of your unit. In the end, you may conclude with a brief statement or quote. You may wish to express your thanks to your cooperating teacher.

For your presentation, you should have copies of your philosophy and artifacts for your supervisor and cooperating teacher. These can be bound or placed in a folder. You may also use note cards during your presentation, but do not rely on these too much. You should practice so that you do not have to read your cards. Remember to smile and make eye contact.

After Student Teaching

After student teaching, you will need to return to Ball State to complete your courses if you do not have any additional placements. If you are not in the Honors College, you will need to take EDEL 450. This course can be taken during the summer session if you student teach in the spring. You will need to register for this course during the appropriate course request period.

Comparing Ball State University to Other Institutions

I decided to research the elementary education student teaching programs of various colleges and universities in Indiana as part of this project. The purpose of this research was to find out what made Ball State's program different and how it was similar to other programs in the state. I researched both private and public institutions throughout the state.

One of the first differences that I noticed was the length of the student teaching experience. Ball State requires elementary education student teachers to complete sixteen weeks of student teaching. In my research I found that other institutions required experiences to be anywhere from twelve weeks to two semesters. This difference was often brought up while I was student teaching. Several teachers at my placement commented that I had a longer experience than they had had.

Another difference that I noticed was the location of student teacher placement. An elementary education student teacher may be placed almost anywhere in the state of Indiana. This is also true for both Indiana University and Purdue University. However, many private institutions require their student teachers to remain within a certain area. Anderson University, for example, requires student teachers to remain within forty miles of the university. Some exceptions are made, however. Student teachers from Anderson University and Goshen College may be placed at the Urban Life Center in Chicago. Goshen College also allows student teachers to be placed at Mennonite schools out of state.

One similarity that I noticed while researching other institutions was how student teachers are supervised and evaluated during their experience. Ball State student teachers are observed and evaluated by a university supervisor every other week. The same is true for student teachers from Purdue University and Indiana University. Student teachers from other institutions are also observed by a university or college supervisor on a regular basis. Every student teaching program that I researched had some sort of final evaluation. Several also had a midterm evaluation, something that Ball State does not require.

Another similarity between the Ball State University elementary education student teaching experience and other institutions' experiences was the amount of classroom experience prior to student teaching. At Ball State, a student must complete five courses involving classroom experience prior to student teaching. Every institution that I researched required courses that involved classroom experience prior to student teaching. Students at Butler University must also complete five courses involving classroom experience. DePauw University requires four courses and Goshen College requires six courses.

In doing my research, I considered the following questions:

1. How much classroom experience does a student have prior to student teaching?
2. What are the requirements for student teaching? (i.e. GPA, classes, hours, etc.)
3. What is the process for applying for student teaching?
4. What is the location of the student teaching?
5. How are student teachers supervised and evaluated during the experience?
6. Is there any preparation prior to beginning the experience.
7. How long is the student teaching experience?
8. Miscellaneous information

I have included the answers to these questions from various institutions in Indiana on the following pages.

Ball State University

1. How much classroom experience does a student have prior to student teaching?

There are five courses involving classroom experience that must be completed prior to student teaching.

2. What are the requirements for student teaching? (i.e. GPA, classes, hours, etc.)

Minimum of 93 hours, "C" or better in prerequisite methods courses and professional education courses, passed the PPST, completed the writing competency requirement, completed the educational technologies competency requirement

3. What is the process for applying for student teaching?

The application is to be completed in the fall of the year before student teaching. The student also has a meeting with a university supervisor to discuss placement.

4. What is the location of the student teaching?

Student teachers can be placed in 55 counties in the state of Indiana.

5. How are student teachers supervised and evaluated during the experience?

Student teachers are observed and evaluated by a university supervisor every other week. The university supervisor and the cooperating teacher complete a final evaluation.

6. Is there any preparation prior to beginning the experience?

The student teacher must meet with the cooperating teacher and principal prior to starting student teaching. The student teacher must also complete a full day observation prior to student teaching.

7. How long is the student teaching experience?

The elementary student teaching experience is 16 weeks.

Anderson University

1. How much classroom experience does a student have prior to student teaching?

Classroom experience: Nearly 150 hours in school settings prior to student teaching

2. What are the requirements for student teaching? (i.e. GPA, classes, hours, etc.)

Admitted to teacher education program, 2.5 GPA, Criminal history check, passed all Praxis tests, positive evaluation from advisors and Dean of Candidates.

3. What is the process for applying for student teaching?

Students eligible for student teaching are required to attend a meeting in the fall of the year prior to student teaching. Packets of information are distributed at this meeting. Students are interviewed by faculty of the School of Education to determine placement possibilities.

4. What is the location of the student teaching?

Placements are made within a 40-mile radius of Anderson University. Students may be placed at the Urban Life Center in Chicago.

5. How are student teachers supervised and evaluated during the experience?

Performance evaluations are made on a regular basis throughout the experience. A final summative evaluation is made involving the cooperating teacher, university supervisor, and student during the final two weeks of the experience. The cooperating teacher makes regular performance evaluations approximately every three weeks during the full-time student teaching. The School of Education supervisor completes three or more evaluations during the full-time student teaching.

6. Is there any preparation prior to beginning the experience?

Students are required to complete an Early Arrival experience of at least five class days in their assigned school prior to the beginning of fall semester classes.

7. How long is the student teaching experience?

The Anderson University student teaching experience is a minimum of thirteen weeks of full-time student teaching.

8. Miscellaneous information

Student teachers are to apply for a substitute license and are eligible to substitute in their cooperating teacher's classroom for a total of three days during the experience. Students may be paid for this time. This may only occur during the last ten weeks of the semester.

Butler University

1. How much classroom experience does a student have prior to student teaching?

Prior to student teaching, students take five courses with field experience.

2. What are the requirements for student teaching? (i.e. GPA, classes, hours, etc.)

Admission to Teacher Education, "C" or better in professional education courses, 2.5 GPA

3. What is the process for applying for student teaching?

Applications are due by January of the year prior to student teaching. The student must attend a Student Teaching Information Session prior to completing the application.

4. What is the location of the student teaching?

Student teachers are placed in the greater Indianapolis metropolitan area. This includes Marion and the contiguous counties.

5. How are student teachers supervised and evaluated during the experience?

Student teachers are supervised and observed by university supervisors throughout the experience. They are evaluated during a midterm evaluation and final evaluation.

6. Is there any preparation prior to beginning the experience?

Orientation prior to student teaching

7. How long is the student teaching experience?

The elementary education student teaching placement is two semesters.

8. Miscellaneous information

Student teachers must attend various seminars during student teaching.

DePauw University

1. How much classroom experience does a student have prior to student teaching?

Prior to student teaching, students take four courses that involve field experience.

2. What are the requirements for student teaching? (i.e. GPA, classes, hours, etc.)

2.5 GPA, admitted to Teacher Education Program, C average or better in all professional education coursed completed

3. What is the process for applying for student teaching?

Applications for student teaching are submitted a full year in advance of the student teaching semester.

4. What is the location of the student teaching?

Placements are made within a 50-mile radius of the DePauw campus. Student teaching placements are made in approved schools with qualified supervising teachers having at least five years of teaching experience and/or holding a master's degree.

5. How are student teachers supervised and evaluated during the experience?

A university supervisor observes the student teacher at least six times during the experience.

6. Is there any preparation prior to beginning the experience?

Student teachers are required to make a pre-visitation to the school.

7. How long is the student teaching experience?

The student teaching experience lasts 15 weeks.

Goshen College

1. How much classroom experience does a student have prior to student teaching?

Prior to student teaching, the student takes 6 courses that include field experience

2. What are the requirements for student teaching? (i.e. GPA, classes, hours, etc.)

Admission to the Education Program, 2.5 GPA, "C" or better in content courses, complete cultural diversity workshops, references from field placement courses

3. What is the process for applying for student teaching?

Must submit a written application

4. What is the location of the student teaching?

Must be placed within 30 miles of Goshen College campus or Urban Life Center in Chicago or a Mennonite school

5. How are student teachers supervised and evaluated during the experience?

A college supervisor visits the student teacher 4-6 times during the experience including a portfolio conference. Cooperating teachers complete a midterm evaluation and a final evaluation.

6. Is there any preparation prior to beginning the experience?

Student teachers attend pre-school workshops the week prior to beginning school. An orientation session is held for all student teachers during the first week of student teaching.

7. How long is the student teaching experience?

Student teaching lasts 12 or more weeks.

8. Miscellaneous information

After about a month of student teaching, a workshop is held on the Goshen College campus. After the midterm, students return to campus for a videotape analysis of a lesson. Another workshop is held a month after this. After the final day in the classroom, student teachers attend seminars for several weeks.

Indiana University

1. How much classroom experience does a student have prior to student teaching?

A minimum of 150 hours of early field experience prior to student teaching.

2. What are the requirements for student teaching? (i.e. GPA, classes, hours, etc.)

Must be admitted to the Teacher Education Program, passed PPST, 2.5 GPA, "C" or better in all professional education classes.

3. What is the process for applying for student teaching?

Application meetings are held the year before student teaching. This meeting is mandatory and the student teaching application is due one week after the application meeting. Future student teachers must also attend pre-professional meetings the semester prior to student teaching.

4. What is the location of the student teaching?

Elementary student teachers may be placed statewide.

5. How are student teachers supervised and evaluated during the experience?

The university supervisor observes and visits the student teacher a minimum of once every two weeks. The student teacher undergoes a midterm evaluation and a final evaluation.

6. Is there any preparation prior to beginning the experience?

The student teacher must meet with the cooperating teacher prior to the beginning of student teaching.

7. How long is the student teaching experience?

The student teaching experience lasts 15 weeks.

Purdue University

1. How much classroom experience does a student have prior to student teaching?

Prior to student teaching, elementary education majors have at least 100 hours of classroom experience.

2. What are the requirements for student teaching? (i.e. GPA, classes, hours, etc.)

Admission to Teacher Education and Professional Semester, at least 60 semester hours of course work, "C" or better in all professional education courses, 2.8 GPA, Pass PPST

3. What is the process for applying for student teaching?

The application must be done in the fall semester of the year prior to student teaching. The application is done online.

4. What is the location of the student teaching?

The cooperating teacher usually has a master's degree and three or more years' experience. Location is anywhere in the state.

5. How are student teachers supervised and evaluated during the experience?

The university supervisor observes the student teacher an average of once every other week.

6. Is there any preparation prior to beginning the experience?

The student teacher makes a pre-visitation to the assigned school. Four to five weeks prior to student teaching, the Office of Field Experiences arranges an orientation program. This is a mandatory meeting where many areas of student teaching are discussed.

7. How long is the student teaching experience?

16 weeks total, 14 weeks in the classroom.

Daily Journals

The following are daily journals that I wrote throughout my student teaching experience. When I stated, I intended to write a journal at the end of everyday. However, as my experience went on, I became busier and was unable to write everyday. I attempted to go back at the end of the week and complete any missing journals. By December, however, I became so busy with teaching and preparing my Showcase Presentation, that I did not write journals everyday. Because my teaching was repetitive, I began to focus on the highlights of the day as well as any differences in my schedule.

I found that rereading my journals helped me to see my growth as an educator. My confidence in my abilities grew over the sixteen weeks. The journals also helped me to see the growth in my own students. I hope that these journals will help future elementary education student teachers feel more comfortable as they start their own experiences. I encourage future student teachers to keep a journal throughout their experience so that they may also see their own growth.

April 25, 2003

Today I finally received my student teaching placement! I was very excited when I checked my status online and it no longer said, "No confirmed placement." I have been placed at West Goshen Elementary School in Goshen, Indiana. While Goshen Community Schools was my first choice for school corporation, this particular school was my third choice school. However, it is close to my home and I am familiar with several of the teachers that work there. I did get my first choice for grade. I will be teaching first grade! This is very exciting because I just finished teaching first grade for EDEL 350. I am most familiar with the Indiana standards for first grade. I hope that this experience will give me a chance to teach some of my lesson plans again.

I am now waiting to receive my confirmation packet. I am unsure if it will be sent to my local address or my home address. After I receive the packet, I will contact the school to set up a time to go in and meet the principal and my classroom supervisor. I cannot wait to meet the people I will be working with next year.

Monday, August 18, 2003

Today was the first day of the school year for the teachers. Mrs. Bontrager sent me the schedule for the first week of school a few weeks ago so that I could be prepared. This morning, the entire staff of the school system met at the high school for the “kick-off.” It was amazing to see how many teachers there are in the school system.

I thought that the meeting would be boring, but I soon discovered just how wrong I was! The meeting started with a skit performed by two teachers. They had rewritten the song, “The Hills are Alive” from *The Sound of Music*. Their version was called “The Halls are Alive.” After that, we watched a video put together by the administrators entitled “No Administrator Left Behind.” It was quite funny to see the Superintendent talking to a dodge ball as if he was in *Cast Away*.

After the movie, it was time to play GCS Survivor. Each school had a team of three to compete in trivia and an obstacle course. They were then instructed to go find the perfect teaching outfit. While they did that, the school board president made a few remarks and presented the school board’s goals for the school year. The Superintendent then gave a short presentation. After that, the assistant superintendents introduced the new staff by having them walk across the stage as if they were in a beauty pageant. Mrs. Bontrager told me that every year they introduce the new staff by making them get up on the stage and do something silly. After learning about the new staff, we had the conclusion to GCS Survivor with no clear winner. The meeting was then concluded.

Next, it was time for a school staff meeting. We headed back to West Goshen to have a staff meeting in the library. I finally got to see the entire building staff. We went around the room and introduced ourselves, but I am still having some trouble

remembering names. During the meeting, the teachers decided when the teaching day should begin and end. They voted to keep the same eight hours as last year, 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Mrs. Tahara went over some new procedures for the school year, mostly dealing with how she would be notifying teachers of events and meetings.

It was very interesting to see how the school year begins for teachers. I never imagined that a staff meeting could be so much fun. I am glad for the opportunity to see what I can expect to experience a year from now when I am starting my first teaching job.

Tuesday, August 19, 2003

Today was the second day of staff meetings at West Goshen. We spent seven hours discussing and revising procedures. It was a lot of work and required much discussion. We kept some things the same as last year, but we also made some big changes.

Our first change was to have the students eat lunch after recess instead of before. While this idea has many benefits for the students, it had many small problems to take care of before we could implement it. First was the problem of what to do with students' coats. Then we had to think about how to make sure the students have clean hands before they eat. Then we had a lengthy discussion on teaching manners in the cafeteria. We finally found solutions everyone could agree on, but it took awhile!

Another change we made was to change what the students did when they arrive at school. Normally, students will stay outside until the bell unless they get breakfast, then they remain in the cafeteria. We decided to allow students to enter the building to go to the library or a special room for reading. We are hoping these options will encourage children to read and help test scores. We will take help with that anyway we can get it! To revise the procedures, we divided into groups and then came back to present our ideas. This reminded me of group work we often do in my elementary education classes. It was good to see the skills we learn in those situations will be necessary in our future careers. I worked with Mrs. Bontrager and Mrs. Robertson on revising the dismissal procedures. Our major change was to dismiss the fourth and fifth grades before the lower grades. We are hoping this will help with congestion in the hallways.

Today's meeting was as fun as yesterday's, but I feel that I learned a lot about the school today. I definitely know now how to handle all the different procedures. I feel today was very helpful and productive.

Wednesday, August 20, 2003

Today was the last day of staff meetings until the students start school. I arrived at the normal teacher start time of 7:30 am and spent half an hour helping Mrs. Bontrager set up the classroom. I wrote all of the students' names on cards for the classroom name card chart and I wrote them all on 3x5 cards for the prize bag.

We started the staff meeting by dividing into our groups from yesterday and writing lesson plans to teach school procedures. These procedures will be taught over the first week of school. I helped Mrs. Bontrager and Mrs. Robertson with ideas on how to teach the dismissal procedure. We are going to have a mock dismissal Friday morning so that all the students can practice and we can see what needs to be better explained.

After coming back together, we spent the rest of the morning discussing discipline. We discussed what behaviors we felt should warrant being sent to the office. A lengthy time was spent discussing what to do about misbehavior during specials. Many teachers do not want to double discipline students if the specials teacher has disciplined them. However, the specials teachers do not want to spend a lot of their time disciplining students. We decided that better communication was needed between the classroom and specials teachers.

After lunch, I made labels for the students' cubbies and put those labels up. I observed the teachers' training in the computer lab. The teachers learned how to assign lessons for the students to do during computer lab time. The best part is that the computer lessons have been matched up with the Indiana standards. After the training, Mrs. Bontrager and I spent some time setting up things in the classroom. I spent an extra

hour at school helping to get ready for tomorrow. I'm excited that the students will be arriving tomorrow morning!

Thursday, August 21, 2003

Today was the first day of school. Although it was a 2-hour early release day, it felt like the students were there the whole day. I was so surprised when I looked at the clock after the kids left, and it was not even one o'clock yet. I learned a lot about the children in my classroom despite the short amount of time together. I am starting to match faces and names and hope to know all of the students by the end of tomorrow.

I arrived at the school early this morning and labeled the students' lunch clips. Mrs. Bontrager gave me my own desk in the room. At eight o'clock, we went out to the front to greet the students. All of the first graders were in a line outside the front doors and there were many parents too. We led all the first graders down to our area of the school and had them sit down in the hallway. Then each teacher called her class. The children looked nervous.

As the students entered the room, I asked their name and helped them find their seat. As of now, we do not have a seating chart; we are waiting until we learn more about the students. Once the students were sitting and had started to color a page I had placed on their desk, Mrs. Bontrager and I introduced ourselves. Then I helped the children find their cubbies out in the hallway.

We spent most of the day explaining and practicing procedures. The students learned how to line up in the room, how to walk down the hall, and how to use the restrooms and sinks. It sounds so simple, but we had plenty of problems. Many of the students could not remember that when in the hall, they are not to touch anything. We had to return to the room a couple times because students forgot the rules.

After the students left, the staff had a meeting in the library to hear news from the librarian and computer lab. Then we had some time to look over student data if we wanted. Mrs. Bontrager and I decided that the room really needed to be organized. We had the students leave the supplies they brought on their desks, so the room was looking very cluttered. In the first grade, the students share their supplies since they do not have individual desks. It was hard, but we managed to find a place for all of the supplies. Mrs. Bontrager will not need pencils for the next five years, she has so many already.

Overall, I would say today was a good day. I learned a lot about the students as a group and as individuals. I feel like I did not do much other than monitor behavior, but I know that soon I will feel overwhelmed. I think that the kids view me as just another teacher. Mrs. Bontrager did not introduce me as a student teacher or tell them that I am still in college. I think this will help the students view me as an authority figure. Tomorrow should be interesting as it is our first full day.

Friday, August 22, 2003

The first week is finally over. Today was the first full day of school and it felt long. Some of the kids asked if it was time to go home after lunch. Even though today was a normal full day, we did not teach what we will normally teach. We still had some procedures to teach and practice. In addition, we practiced procedures that we learned yesterday.

The outdoor recess procedures were taught by a video that some teachers put together earlier in the week. It was very nicely done and the kids really enjoyed it. We reviewed what was said on the video before going outside for recess. Mrs. Bontrager gave me the job of taking attendance and collecting lunch money. It is pretty simple, but I am excited to have my first responsibility. The students learned to place their clip on the lunch chart so that attendance can be taken in the morning.

Part of the morning was spent teaching the students about active listening, which is one of the lifelong guidelines. I had made copies of an active listening coloring picture for the students, so Mrs. Bontrager used that as a starting point. She had a CD of songs about the different lifelong guidelines, so she played the active listening songs for them. For the rest of the day, the students were reminded to practice active listening.

After lunch, Mrs. Bontrager gathered the students on the carpet to do some work with the name chart and pocket chart. It was good to get to do some “real” lessons finally. The kids even asked if they could have homework! After learning about the library procedures, the students had library as their first special. For the most part, they did a good job of remembering the procedures. After the library, I took the class for a

bathroom break. They acted up a little, but soon learned that I am just as tough as Mrs. Bontrager is when it comes to discipline. They will get used to me disciplining them.

Overall, I think today went well. We had a couple of behavior issues, but I think the students will soon learn how Mrs. Bontrager and I expect them to behave. It will be interesting to see how they react to my absence on Monday. I cannot wait to get more responsibilities. I am really enjoying my experience.

Monday, August 25, 2003

I spent today on the Ball State campus, attending the student teacher orientation. The meeting began at 8:30 am at the Student Center. Every Ball State student teacher was there. The first half of the morning was spent learning how we will be evaluated and assessed throughout the experience. A university supervisor walked us through the *Evaluation of Student Teachers Guidebook*, which I had to purchase prior to the meeting. I had to purchase one for myself and one for Mrs. Bontrager as well as a *Student Teacher's Portfolio Handbook* for myself.

The guidebook is rubrics for each of the INTASC principles. These will be used during my Benchmark meetings with Mrs. Bontrager. It seems a bit overwhelming, but I think I understand it clearly. We also discussed the student teaching timeline. During my 16 weeks of student teaching, I will spend 6 weeks co-teaching with Mrs. Bontrager and then the next 6 weeks, I will teach solo. The other four weeks are spent assisting.

The second half of the morning was spent mainly learning about the licensing process. We learned about the tests that must be taken prior to applying for a teaching license. We also heard about the application and when to send it in. We were all also trained in handling blood born pathogens during this half.

The afternoon was spent meeting with my university supervisor. Mr. Trout went over his syllabus. Yes, even student teaching has a syllabus! We learned about our daily, weekly, and semester responsibilities. Daily, I need to keep track of my hours for my license and update my Developmental Portfolio. Weekly, I need to write at least two reflective journal entries and write two or more weekly goals. Throughout the semester, I need to collect artifacts for my portfolios, update my Record of Required Activities,

assume responsibilities, create displays, participate in conferences, and conduct myself in a professional manner. Suddenly it seems like a lot of work!

I also need to do two classroom observations and complete reports on those. I must also video tape myself twice and evaluate the tape. I hate watching myself on tape. Along with my lesson plans, I also need to develop a teaching unit. It seems like I have a lot to do in a short amount of time, but I am sure that Mrs. Bontrager and Mr. Trout will be helpful and supportive. I am still excited to be student teaching.

Tuesday, August 26, 2003

Today was my first official day of student teaching. I am glad that I started when the kids started. Since I have been there from the first day of school, they identify me as a teacher. I already know a lot about them in just three days. They seemed happy to see that I was back after being gone yesterday.

Nothing much happened during school today. I mostly just observed and helped out as much as possible. I am glad to use this time to get to know my students and Mrs. Bontrager's classroom procedures, but it is not a lot of fun. I think things will get more exciting as time passes. I am sure I will be busy soon enough.

The real excitement today came right as school was ending. At the end of the day, right after the buses had left and most of the students had been picked up, a storm hit. It was a big storm that also involved a tornado watch. Since it was only my third day of student teaching, I had no idea what to do. We had not covered tornado drills yet. The teachers quickly got all the remaining students inside, but then we were unsure where to put them. At first, they were in the gym, but several teachers pointed out that this was an unsafe place, so we all moved into the hallway.

Since I was unsure of what to do, I stood back while the teachers instructed the students to kneel on the floor and protect their heads. I remembered this from my school days. When the power went out, some of the students became scared and nervous. I watched as teachers comforted those students. It made me realize that as a teacher it is my job to make sure students feel cared about in every situation. The situation showed me just how important quick thinking is to the job. I think that the staff handled the situation well; it was not something that could be prepared for

Wednesday, August 27, 2003

Nothing very exciting happened today. It is interesting to watch Mrs. Bontrager teach, but I am starting to get bored. I am also getting worried. Mrs. Bontrager is a great teacher and always seems to know exactly what to do or say. It makes me nervous because I will have my own classroom in a year and I do not feel ready. It makes me nervous for a few weeks from now, when I start teaching.

I did not do much today other than make copies and observe. I did help the children with handwriting today. Some of them have trouble with making letters backwards or mixing capital and lower case letters. I also helped them put together puzzles for the last half hour today. It is fun to interact with the children. I also like to walk the car riders outside at the end of the day. I stay outside until all of my students have been picked up and say goodbye to each of them. I also try to stand outside the room in the morning and greet the students as they come in the room.

I try to help with classroom management. I remind the students of the rules and procedures. Most of them respect my authority and know that I can discipline them just like any other staff member. Only one girl gives me trouble. Any time I scold or discipline her, she just looks at me as if she cannot believe that I would dare to discipline her. It is frustrating because in a few weeks, the classroom will be in my charge and they will have to listen to what I say. I would like them to get used to the idea of me being in charge.

Thursday, August 28, 2003

Today was pretty much the same as any other day. I did a lot of observation. I did get to read the students a story in the morning. The kids had computer today for the first time, so we spent the time having them practice typing their names. I walked around and helped them find letters on the keyboard and pointed out their mistakes. Other than that, I mostly just observed.

I am getting a lot better at discipline. The children are starting to get used to me being an authority. There are only a few that resist me. I am firm when reprimanding and feel more confident about it than I did a week ago. It is hard to believe that school has only been in session for a week. It feels as if we have been there longer.

It is getting frustrating that the children are still not following procedures. We walk in the hallway all the time, yet they cannot follow hallway procedures correctly. I feel as if I am constantly reminding them to whisper or not to touch anything. This is something that they should know; it is not difficult. Mrs. Bontrager and I make them practice it and we keep saying the procedures, yet they still do not follow the rules.

I have reached my goal of knowing the students' names by the end of the week. I accidentally called one boy by another's name, but I have it figured out now. Now I am going to try to learn all of their last names. I know some of them already, but this way it will be easier to find their mailboxes, since I put them alphabetically by last name. I am having fun student teaching, but I am glad this weekend is three days; I need some rest.

Friday, August 29, 2003

My first official week of student teaching is over! I feel as if I have been there for a month. I originally thought that this week would be unproductive for me, but I have learned a lot. I now know all my students' first names and most of their last names. I know every procedure in the classroom and school. I have learned a lot about my students as individuals. I have also learned a lot about working with Mrs. Bontrager.

Mr. Trout came today to talk to Mrs. Bontrager and me. It worked out well because the kids had indoor recess during that time. He mostly went over the same things we talked about on Monday. He asked me if I had any questions, but I did not have any at this point. He also scheduled his next visit.

I have really enjoyed my student teaching experience so far. Today Mrs. Bontrager told me that she liked the way I helped with classroom management. She especially liked that I did not have to be told, I took the initiative. I feel very comfortable working with her and with the kids. I really like my school and am glad I was placed there. I feel as if I belong.

Tuesday, September 02, 2003

It was a long weekend and the kids' behavior certainly showed it. They could not seem to remember the hallway procedures at all. Twice in the day, I had to take some of them out in the hall and make them practice hallway procedures. Both times, one of the students would do something that was against hallway procedures, despite the lecture they got not five minutes before. It is getting frustrating trying to reinforce the rules.

This morning the entire school had an assembly to practice assembly procedures and review others. It went well for the most part. Unfortunately, it was scheduled during our recess time, so we gave the students an indoor recess much earlier than normal. It also lasted longer than it was supposed to so that cut into the time for centers.

I worked with several of the kids in the afternoon. I pulled some of them out into the hallway to finish cutting their names out of magazines. It was nice to get to work with the kids in a smaller group. We are lucky to have a large area outside our classroom that has tables in it.

Mrs. Bontrager asked me to go through the book order catalogs and pick a couple to send home. She is going to let me have the free teacher picks and she is going to teach me how to fill out the order sheets. I looked at them while the students were at music, and they sure look confusing. After school, the first grade team met for a half hour to discuss when we wanted the instructional assistants in our rooms and we started discussing the Back to School Night. Overall, today was a lot less boring than last week.

Wednesday, September 03, 2003

Today was uneventful. The students' behavior was better today as a whole. One boy had to be sent out to the hall, but that is common for him. I did not do any instruction with the kids today. When they arrived, I stopped them at the door and asked them their favorite color. I kept a running tally on a marker board and we discussed it after the announcements.

I passed out book orders at the end of the day and explained them to the students. While they looked at them, I pointed out different books. I worked with Mrs. Billet to put papers in the Wednesday folders. Mrs. Billet is the first grade instructional aide.

After school, Mrs. Bontrager and I made a seating chart for the carpet. We put down making tape and wrote the students' names on it. I hope that this will cut down on talking and goofing off. Then, I made a new seating chart for the classroom. That was hard. It is tough to figure out who can sit with whom and who needs to be close to the front. We will see how the kids handle this one and I will make any changes tomorrow.

Thursday, September 04, 2003

Today was a busy day. I did a lot of assisting, but no direct instruction. This morning, we had the students make a page for a class book. It is based on the book, Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? The students made their faces out of construction paper. It was funny to see how the kids picture themselves. I monitored behavior during centers. I feel as if I am constantly reminding them to be quieter. Mrs. Bontrager had to fire them all for a few minutes and that got the point across. It is frustrating because it feels like if I say it, they ignore it, but if Mrs. Bontrager says it, they do it. It is weird because I have been there since the very first day and nobody has ever said anything to them about me being less of teacher than Mrs. Bontrager.

Later in the day, we gave the children marker boards and had them make letters. A lot of them know their upper and lower case letters. Some of them just make them backwards and a few have to be reminded of what upper and lower case means. It is a good informal assessment to see who knows what.

During specials, the first grade team collaborated. The teachers spent the time discussing a group goal. It was interesting to me to see what happens on the other side of teaching. Each teacher also has to have a personal goal for his or her classroom. This is similar to the weekly goals for student teaching. The first grade team also met after school to discuss the literacy night next Tuesday night. That meeting was very productive and now we feel ready for the literacy night. I am looking forward to meeting my students' parents.

Friday, September 05, 2003

Thanks to the kids, Mrs. Bontrager and I are getting sick. I cannot breathe very well through my nose and my throat is sore. Mrs. Bontrager has the same symptoms. I am not sure which kids are sick, although one girl was out for a couple days this week. I guess this is just a hazard of the job. I will be sure to wash my hands more now.

This week went by fast. Mrs. Bontrager and I did not do a lot of direct instruction today. We had the students copy a sentence for morning work and then Mrs. Martin, the school counselor came in and talked to them about working out problems. After recess, we had centers until lunch. When the students came back from lunch, Mrs. Buller came in and taught a math lesson. Mrs. Buller is another first grade teacher, but she is also the math coach. The kids really enjoyed her lesson so we are planning to have her come in every Friday after lunch to do a fun math lesson.

After Mrs. Buller's lesson, I directed community circle. In afternoon community circle, a student's name is drawn and everybody must give that person a put up. I then read the kids a story. They were a little more rambunctious than normal, but that may be because it was Friday afternoon. After library, the class celebrated Josh's birthday. His mom had made cupcakes. One of our students, Judith is a Jehovah's Witness, so I took her down to the computer lab to play while the class had their cupcakes. I hope her parents explain to her their beliefs because I do not want her to feel left out. When it comes time to talk about various holidays, I will have to plan a fun activity for her.

Overall, this week went well. It feels so natural for me to go to school everyday instead of going to classes on campus. I hope I will be able to adjust next semester. I am having a lot of fun student teaching.

Monday, September 08, 2003

For a Monday, today went fast. It was a normal Monday. We started by having the students copy a sentence and draw a picture for morning work. This is an area that I am going to take over slowly. Mrs. Bontrager and I check the students' work for spacing, spelling, and handwriting. When they are done, they can look at books. Eventually we will just have them write journals instead of copying. Then it is time for community circle. Mostly I just observe during this time. I sit next to Mrs. Bontrager and I will share, but I do not have a leadership role yet.

I give praise and assistance during letter work. I walk around the room and help the students who are struggling. If it is our week for recess duty, I help with monitoring the playground. I make sure that the kids are following recess procedures. Otherwise, I help with prep work in the classroom. During centers, I walk around and make sure the kids are staying on task. I have to remind them to talk quietly a lot.

Mostly, I manage behavior and provide assistance in the classroom. Although it seems boring, I think I have learned more in the past 3 weeks than I have in the past 3 years. A lot of teaching has to be learned hands-on. I have learned a lot about management and daily routines. This experience is the most fun I have had during my time at Ball State.

Tuesday, September 09, 2003

Well if yesterday was fast, today was long! I was at school for nearly 12 hours and have to be back there in less than 12 hours. Although student teaching keeps me busy, it is still a lot of fun. I really enjoy working with my class and I really like the school.

My university supervisor came to observe me today. This was the first time that I have taught the class a lesson. I read the kids a book and then we did an art project based on the book. I was surprised at how well the kids behaved throughout the lesson. They did a good job of participating. Both Mr. Trout and Mrs. Bontrager thought that the lesson went well. I am happy with how it went.

After school, we had a corporation-wide grade level meeting. All the first grade teachers in the corporation came to our school for an hour meeting. Mrs. Tahara ran it and we looked over the standards for the first grade and discussed what we thought was important. The hour went fast.

After the meeting, we had an hour until the Back to School/Literacy Night started. We had a quick dinner and then it was time to meet the parents. Only about six of our students came tonight. I was disappointed because I wanted to meet their parents, but I guess I will have to wait until conferences next month. Overall, the night went well.

Wednesday, September 10, 2003

Today was a typical Wednesday. I did not do any teaching today. One new thing is we started Math today. Mrs. Bontrager is using Saxon Math this year. She has used it before and it looks simple enough to teach. Everyday we do a meeting in the morning to go over the calendar and weather. Then later in the day, we do the lesson and the first side of the homework sheet. The kids do the second side at home and bring it back the next day. I think it will be easy for me to take over this part of the day. I will probably supplement lessons with manipulatives and things that I have learned in my math classes.

Today was the first grade collaboration day while the students were at specials. We spent our time today discussing field trips for the year. We are planning to take a field trip to a pumpkin farm towards the end of October. Miss Everett and Mrs. King are planning that one. At the beginning of October, we want to take a walking field trip to a local nature center. They have educational programs based on Indiana standards. Mrs. Buller and Mrs. Bontrager are working on that one and they are going to teach me about planning field trips.

At the end of the day, I had two students of which I was very proud. One of the boys, Dylan, has had some behavior problems and has spent part of everyday in the hallway. Today, he stayed in the class the whole day. I was so proud of his good behavior. At dismissal, I take the students who are picked up outside. Everyday Philip forgets to get in my line and I have to remind him, but today he was the first one in my line. I was so surprised to see him there. I hope that both boys continue their good behaviors.

Thursday, September 11, 2003

The events that happened two years ago today were our focus for the morning. Mrs. Tahara talked about them during the morning announcements. She asked for a moment of silence and then everybody recited the Pledge of Allegiance. She ended with the definition of a patriot. After the students had finished their morning work, I read to them the book, September 12, We Knew Everything Would Be Alright. We then had a community circle to share our feelings about the day.

The rest of the morning was normal. During centers, Mrs. Billet pulled kids out into the hall to do sight word testing. I watched her test some of the kids. Some of them surprised me with how well they did. She should be done with that tomorrow. The kids really need to work on staying quiet during centers. They also interrupt Mrs. Bontrager and me a lot. Today we told them that they could not come up to us unless they were bleeding. It did not work.

After lunch, I went to Miss Everett's class to do an observation. I chose to observe her class because it is a sheltered English class. All of the children in her class are identified as English as a new language. It was interesting to see how she teaches using both English and Spanish. I am amazed at how well she speaks Spanish. The children respond really well to her and they seem to making huge improvements in their vocabulary.

Friday, September 12, 2003

Well it is finally Friday. This third week has been long. I cannot believe that it was only Tuesday that Mr. Trout came to observe and we had the Back to School Night. I am feeling very confident in my teaching so far. I feel comfortable at school. It feels as if I have always worked there. I do not want to go back to campus; I want to start teaching!

Today was fairly typical. I did my usual assisting and observing, but today was the last day for that. Mrs. Bontrager taught a Saxon math lesson in the afternoon. I walked around the room and made sure the students were on task. Some kids had behavior problems today. I think they get antsy on Fridays. Next week we are starting the behavior chart, I hope that will help.

After school, Mrs. Bontrager and I planned Monday together. Well, she did most of the planning, but now I know how she plans her days. On Monday, I am going to teach the entire afternoon. I will teach the math lesson and homework page. The kids will then go to art. After art, I will lead community circle and do a read aloud. I am really looking forward to teaching on Monday. Mrs. Bontrager is easy to work with. I feel very lucky to be placed with her.

Monday, September 15, 2003

This week is my fourth official week of student teaching. The experience has been flying by quickly. I have been having a lot of fun and do not want it to end. I think it will be hard to make the transition back to being the student and not the teacher.

Today we had four students absent, including the troublemaker. Today was also the start of the behavior chart. Everybody ended the day in green. I was proud of them, but there were moments I had to threaten to turn their card. I hope tomorrow will go better.

Since this is week four, Mrs. Bontrager and I began to team-teach. She teaches in the mornings, we both teach during centers, and I teach the afternoon. That means that I teach the math lesson and homework as well as the community circle. We have specials in the afternoon, so I get a break then.

Today's math lesson went well. It was a long one, but the kids stuck with me and performed well. Since we do Saxon Math, the lessons are already planned. I made a copy of the plan to put in my files. The kids behaved well during community circle. I think the good behavior may have had something to do with so many kids being absent today. I hope that even with all the students at school, every afternoon can go so well.

Tuesday, September 16, 2003

The kids were rambunctious today. I could tell from the beginning that it was going to be a tough day. At times, it felt as if it was the first day of school. I was constantly reminding them of the procedures. During my math lesson, they were continually talking. The lesson took far longer than it should have because of all the talking. Their behavior today has motivated me to be tougher tomorrow. After four weeks of school, they should know how to walk in the hallway.

I really like teaching the math lesson. It is easy because everything is already planned. I go through the lesson, add notes about helping individual students, and cross off things that I do not want to do just yet. I like teaching this class and this is an easy way for them to get used to me instructing them. The kids seem to enjoy the lessons and they all completed their homework last night. I hope that attitude will continue.

Wednesday, September 17, 2003

The kids were badly behaved today once again. The biggest problem is that they constantly talk when they are not supposed to be talking. Whenever Mrs. Bontrager or I ask them to do something quietly, they ignore us and get loud. I asked them today if they knew what quietly meant and they said that they did. During my math lesson, I told them that if they did not talk, we would get through the lesson faster. It did not work; the lesson actually took too long.

Mrs. Bontrager and I are getting tough on the kids. If they do not listen the first time they are given a warning, then they have to pay the consequences. We had four kids go into yellow today. It always happens after lunch. That makes me feel that maybe it is my teaching style that is not working. However, I give them all warnings and their behavior is unacceptable. The students are just going to have to get used to me teaching and disciplining them.

We had a staff meeting after school today. A guest speaker came to talk about learning styles. It turns out, the guest speaker was my seventh grade science teacher. It was an interesting meeting. We all learned about our own personal learning styles. Mrs. Bontrager and I are different styles, but I think we work well together.

Thursday, September 18, 2003

Well, today's behavior was not much better than yesterday's. At the end of the day, I had one child on red and several on yellow. Every child received at least one warning prior to being told to turn his or her card. That gives them a chance to change their behavior. If they chose not to change their behavior, then they have a consequence. When a child gets to red, I send home a note telling the parents what happened. The parent has to sign it and return it to me.

I really enjoy teaching the math lessons. I am getting ideas about what works when teaching the different topics and what does not. However, I am tired of fighting the kids everyday for their attention. I am constantly telling them to do things without talking, yet they talk every time. Once, today they did what they were asked without talking. It was so quiet in the room; I was shocked. I really hope that their behavior will change if I keep on them. I think that some of the kids have been shocked when they were told to change their card. I hope that that shock will remind them of their behavior.

During collaboration today, we discussed the upcoming field trips. We have set dates for both trips. Mrs. Bontrager is going to show me how to fill out the forms for the trip we are taking in two weeks. Since that trip will cost each child one dollar, we are going to ask the PTO for the money. It was suggested that maybe I would like to go to a PTO meeting sometime. Mrs. Buller offered to go with me. I really like the first grade team; everybody is friendly and helpful.

Friday, September 19, 2003

I cannot believe that I have been student teaching for a month. The past four weeks have flown past. I am now a quarter done with my experience. I am having such a good time; I do not want it to end!

Today was a typical Friday. I like Fridays because we can wear jeans. I did not do as much teaching today as I normally do. This is because Mrs. Buller comes in on Fridays to teach a fun math lesson. This way the kids do not have homework on Fridays. The behavior was much better today. I only had two kids go into yellow and they were the two that always go into yellow.

After school, Mrs. Bontrager and I had our first Benchmark Conference. It went well. I had given myself mostly basics, but she gave me a couple proficient. I was pleased with those. We had a good discussion on what needed to be worked on and what was going well. I felt very comfortable talking to her and really appreciated her suggestions. Next week, I am going to teach the afternoon on Monday, but on Tuesday, I am going to teach the morning. That should be interesting because the morning is less structured and more on your feet planning.

Monday, September 22, 2003

I spent my downtime today looking over all of my requirements. I cannot believe that it is already week 5. Right now, I feel nervous about getting all of my requirements done. I am most nervous about getting artifacts for all of the principles. I have a few, but I do not have one for each yet. Some of the principles have required artifacts for my Showcase Portfolio. I like that I know what I need, but I am still worried about actually getting it.

I am beginning to feel a little overwhelmed. I am supposed to videotape myself teaching and analyze the tape by the end of this week. I doubt that will actually get done this week, so it has to be done sometime next week. I am glad that I have completed one of my observations. I need to start putting together classroom displays and bulletin boards. I have an idea for one, but I do not know where to put it, as we do not have a bulletin board near our classroom.

I like team teaching. Tomorrow I am going to teach in the morning. Right now, I feel like we are still in the first few weeks of school, yet school started a month ago. I hope that we get to start reading groups this week. I am looking forward to seeing how the day goes once everything is started. I am still nervous about solo teaching, but I hope that I will feel better about it in the next few weeks.

Tuesday, September 23, 2003

Today was my first day teaching in the morning. Teaching the morning is very different from teaching in the afternoon. It is a lot less structured. We do whatever we can fit in before lunch. We spend the morning working on language arts. I felt a little confused about what to do next, even though I had it all written in my plan book. Centers are a relief in the morning. The only thing I have to do right now during centers is keep the class quiet. Soon we will be starting reading groups during centers.

Mrs. Bontrager and I did a lot of paperwork today. We are trying to form reading groups based on the students' levels from last spring. We had to go through their literacy folders and fill in their scores on corporation sheets. We still have not formed the groups, but we now know at what levels our students are. We did complete the paperwork for the field trip next week. We had to request sack lunches for all the kids. Even though we are walking, we had to fill out a transportation request so that the transportation office knows we are using our local community. We also filled out the permission slip that will go home with every student tomorrow.

I used my after school time to prepare for my math lesson tomorrow. My supervisor is coming to observe, so I did not want to do a Saxon lesson. I prepared a graphing lesson using children's literature. This will be a good review for the upcoming math test. They will need to use a pictograph on the test and use the words most and fewest. I used all these concepts in my lesson and I am hoping to do some interactive writing in it too.

Wednesday, September 24, 2003

Today I taught in the afternoon because my supervisor was coming to observe me. I think that I prefer to teach in the afternoons. It is more structured because we have specials in the afternoon. We always do math in between lunch and specials. After specials, we do something to wrap up the day such as a community circle.

I taught a math lesson on graphing this afternoon. It was different from the normal Saxon lessons since I developed the lesson myself. It also was the first time I had taught this lesson. The concept of graphing was not new to the students, but the lesson required details they did not already know. The students did a good job with the lesson. They behaved well which was a relief since I was being observed. The observation went well. Mr. Trout had some good suggestions for me.

After the lesson, I had an opportunity to reflect on how the lesson went. I did my own reflection and thought of a few spots that needed to be smoothed out. Mrs. Bontrager then went over the lesson with me. She helped me to see a few problems and offered some solutions that she saw. This was good because she and I saw the same problems and I already began to think about how I could fix them. It was nice to hear another opinion on the lesson. After those reflections, I went back and rewrote the lesson plan to include the new ideas. I think that the next time I teach the lesson it will go better due to my reflections.

Thursday, September 25, 2003

Today I taught part of the morning and part of the afternoon. It was a nice balance of unstructured and structured time. I think the most chaotic time for me is the hour and forty-five minutes before morning recess. During that time, I feel like I am just trying to do as much as possible in that amount of time.

Today I read the big book, Bill Grogan's Goat with the kids. This is the third day we have used this particular book. The kids know the story pretty well which is good because I want them to read it with me. I added two words from the text to the word wall and then we played some word wall games. This is where it is easy to either stretch plans out or cut things to catch up on time.

Mrs. Bontrager taught the rest of the morning, which included a math test and centers. After lunch, I taught the Saxon Math lesson. I like the Saxon program because the lessons are already planned for me. However, I can still add thing that I think would help the students or even take out things I think the students do not need. The special today was computer so I spent that time managing and observing the students. Mrs. Bontrager taught the rest of the day. We had our usual community circle and a read aloud. Overall, the day went well.

Friday, September 26, 2003

Today I did most of the teaching, which was not a lot. After the students wrote their journals, we read the big book, Bill Grogan's Goat, again. We then added two more words to the word wall and played some games. At little after 9:00, Mrs. Martin, the counselor, came to talk to the kids until recess time. The kids really enjoy having her come in.

After recess, we had centers until lunch. I think centers are a great idea and I plan to use them in my own classroom. The kids really enjoy centers too. I think their favorite center is computer. Right now, I just observe and manage the kids while they do centers. Eventually we will do reading groups during center time as well.

After lunch, Mrs. Buller came to do the fun Friday math lesson. She read them the book, Ten Black Dots. Then she had the kids make their own dot books. Mrs. Bontrager and I gave them the time until library to work on their books. The kids truly liked this activity. It was neat to see the creative things they came up with.

During library, I watch the students and help them pick out books. I can use the time for some prep while the librarian reads to them. After library, we had time for a community circle before passing out the prizes for the week and getting ready to go home. It is hard to believe that another week is over.

Monday, September 29, 2003

Well, this week is off to an interesting start. It is another team-teaching week. This week, Mrs. Bontrager is teaching in the morning and I teach the afternoon. The biggest difference is that we plan our time separately. My half is not very hard since afternoons are structured. I teach math, the kids have a special, and then we do community circle and a read aloud. It is nice to plan my time on my own though. It is helping me get used to the idea of eventually planning the whole day.

The kids' behavior left something to be desired today. As usual, things fell apart during the afternoon. I had at least five students in yellow at the end of the day. I was pleased that none of them went into red. They ignore us when we tell them not to talk or to do something quietly. They do not follow procedures, no matter how many times we remind them. I was so frustrated today during math. I began to feel that I had no control of the class. I hate feeling that 23 six year olds are controlling me. Luckily, I was able to calm down during specials. I am just going to have to work on them. They need to learn to respect me as the teacher and authority figure.

This week feels different because of Thursday and Friday. Thursday morning, the entire first grade is taking a walking field trip to a nearby park. The interpretive center is doing a program on the food chain and then we are letting the kids play on the playground there. On Friday, we have a two-hour early release. The afternoon will spent in teacher in-service. So far, nobody knows what that is about.

Tuesday, September 30, 2003

Nothing memorable happened today. That may be because the students' behavior was better today than it was yesterday. Dylan stayed in green the whole day. He normally has to move his card at least once. Yesterday, Mrs. Bontrager made a deal with him that if he stayed in green for a whole day, he would get a prize. I made sure that at the end of the day, I let him know how proud of him I was. I hope that he can continue this behavior. Mrs. Bontrager is going to make the number of days longer to help him.

I taught math as usual. Today's lesson was on sorting. I kept sorting the students in different ways and had them guess what the sorting rule was. They are catching on to it. Sorting is something that is reviewed in coming lessons. I think the kids enjoy math as much as they can in a scripted program. They seemed to enjoy the sorting today. Tomorrow we are working with geoboards, something they seem to enjoy. I think I am going to take in my clear geoboard to use on the overhead. I think that will help the kids see what I am doing better. I got my geoboard with my Fraction Islands.

After school, I went to Target for a quick errand and was sidetracked by all the cool stuff I kept finding for a classroom. I have already begun buying things for my future classroom. Mostly I buy things that I have seen Mrs. Bontrager or other teachers in the building use. I have found that it is a good idea to check the clearance racks right after school starts. I am going to need to get a tote for all my stuff. I have also ordered many books from the book orders. The bonus points and free picks are quickly becoming one of my favorite things about being the teacher.

Wednesday, October 01, 2003

Today was one of the best days I have had during this experience. Overall, the day went well. There were some behavior problems, but they were the usual misbehaviors from the usual students. Mrs. Bontrager taught the morning as usual. We both monitored centers along with Mrs. Billet. There were not any problems during recess and I was not informed of any major problems during lunch.

I felt that I had one of the better afternoons today. When the students returned to the room after lunch, I had a short talk with them about lunchroom procedures. I reminded them that they should only take food that they are going to eat. I also reminded them that they should not spend their time talking. They can talk when they are done eating. Some of the students are taking too long because they spend too much time talking. I was told today that Dylan spent his whole lunchtime talking. I suggested to the lunch workers that they could put him at a table by himself if he continues to waste his lunchtime.

After those reminders, I began the math lesson. Today's lesson was on using the geoboards to make shapes. The students also learned to identify inside and outside. I began the lesson by reminding them how to use the geobands. Since they are using the geoboards and geobands in centers, I had thought that this would be unnecessary. However, as I observed centers, I realized that the review would do them good. Despite my reminders, some students still had problems keeping the bands on their board. Overall, the students did a good job of making shapes on the geoboard. I had a few that did not follow my instructions on purpose. I reminded them of my instructions and then let them know that I knew what they were doing and that I disapproved of it.

My biggest problem during math lessons has been the students talking despite me asking them to complete the tasks without talking. Mrs. Bontrager left me alone in the room so that I could work on this by myself. I have been using various methods to get their attention and today I was tired of having to remind them not to talk. Today I decided that the only way to get their attention was for me to get tough with them. After asking them to do things without talking and being ignored, I announced, "If you are talking, you turn your card." The kids looked surprised and a little stunned when I said that. They quickly found out just how serious I was as I told students who were talking to turn their card. Today's lesson was the quietest lesson I have taught in the past three weeks.

The special today was P.E. I think that this is my students' favorite special. They all seem to be excited when it is time to go to the gym. The gym teacher, Mr. Arndt is new to the school this year. I have not spoken to him much, but he seems like a nice guy who has fun with his job. I think that perhaps I will observe him for my second observation. Lately, the kids have been coming back from P.E. sweaty and tired. I do not mind because we have specials late in the day. It is nice to have the kids calm in the classroom because they have used up all their energy in P.E.

After the kids changed their shoes, I had them go to community circle. This is something that we do at least once a day. Yet, the students still have trouble making a circle quickly. Invariably, I have to ask them all to scoot back to make enough room. A few have to be reminded how to sit in community circle. In the afternoon, we do put ups. I draw a student's name out of a bag and they sit in the middle of the circle. I pass around a beanbag and every student has to share a put up for the person in the middle.